

Evaluation Statement

Proposed Classification: Evidence Technician, GS-1802-08

Location: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Office of Law Enforcement

References:

- Position Classification Flysheet for Compliance Inspection and Support Services, GS-1802, TS-45, October 1980
- Job Family Position Classification Standard for Assistance Work in the Legal and Kindred Group, GS-0900, August 2001
- Grade Evaluation Guide for Compliance Work, January and July 1991, TS-101 and TS-106
- Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work, June 1989, TS-91
- Guide for the Evaluation of Program Specialist Positions, October 1967, TS-70
- Factor Evaluation System (FES) Primary Standard

Background: The Office of Law Enforcement's (OLE) mission is to protect wildlife resources by investigating wildlife crimes, regulating wildlife trade, and helping others understand and comply with protection laws. OLE works in partnership with Federal, international, State, tribal, and local counterparts. Currently, a variety of new challenges and trends complicate this work. Population pressures, more accessible international travel and trade, frequent work with individuals with languages other than English, the proliferation of organized crime activity, and the threat of invasive species all impact the nature of the work and the skills required.

Future work requires increased skill in using advanced technology, analytical skill to evaluate and interpret data, including human intelligence and the ability to make risk assessments in order to focus inspections and investigations. OLE must expand partnerships, as well as increase the use of multi-agency and multi-function teams to accomplish high-risk, high-impact investigations.

This position is vital in ensuring that criminal investigators focus on the tasks necessary to accomplish high impact work such as identifying, disrupting, and dismantling organizations involved in illegal commercialization of wildlife. The incumbent serves as an Evidence Technician providing specialized technical support to criminal investigators in ensuring compliance with fish and wildlife laws, regulations, policies, and procedures. Incumbent is the technical expert regarding crime scene evidence collection, evidence documentation and control, computer seizure, and preparation of evidence materials used in legal proceedings.

Series determination: The incumbent of this position performs one-grade interval technical work in support of Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) investigators and criminal investigators. Incumbents must be well-versed in inspection or investigation processes, procedures, and regulations. The incumbent of this position assists investigators with data management, preparing reports, and basic analysis of data for trends or inconsistencies in data.

This work is comparable to that described in the Compliance Inspection and Support Series, GS-1802. The Compliance Inspection and Support Series includes positions that perform technical support work in assuring compliance with or enforcement of Federal law, regulations, or other mandatory guidelines and that are not classifiable to another, more specific, occupational series. The work requires knowledge of prescribed procedures, established techniques, directly applicable guidelines, and pertinent characteristics of regulated items or activities. Therefore, the recommended series for this position is Compliance Inspection and Support Series, GS-1802.

Title determination: There are no titles prescribed for the Compliance Inspection and Support Series, GS-1802. The title *Evidence Technician* is descriptive of the work performed and meets the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) guidelines for the titling of positions.

Grade determination: The Compliance and Inspection and Support Series does not contain grade-level criteria but suggests evaluating positions in the Series by reference to classification guides and standards for specific occupational series requiring analogous knowledge and skills. Several standards and guides were reviewed for appropriateness in evaluating this position.

The Job Family Position Classification Standard for Assistance Work in the Legal and Kindred Group, GS-0900 (the Standard), provides evaluation criteria for work similar and analogous to the work of the subject position. This Standard covers one-grade interval support positions that involve such work as:

- assisting individuals in developing needed evidence and preparing required documents or in resolving errors, delays, or other problems;
- performing support and related work in connection with the examination of legal instruments and supporting documents when the work requires the application of particular regulatory and procedural knowledge;
- performing legal assistance work that requires specialized knowledge of processes, procedures, and practices to support legal activities.

The Guide for the Evaluation of Program Specialist Positions was considered for evaluating this position. However, that Guide is intended for use in the grade-level evaluation of professional and highly technical positions that involve the development, evaluation, and promotion of social welfare, social insurance and related programs. That work was not similar enough to that of the incumbents of the Investigative Technician position to permit an accurate evaluation of the position.

The Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work was also considered. However, this Guide does not cover work that requires a practical knowledge of technical fields such as evidence collection and documentation.

Also considered was the Grade Evaluation Guide for Compliance Work. However, this Guide is intended for the evaluation of two-grade interval work requiring a bachelor's degree or its equivalent and is not appropriate for evaluating this position, which is in a one-grade interval series.

The Job Family Position Classification Standard for Assistance Work in the Legal and Kindred Group, GS-0900 (the Standard) is written in the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format. Under the FES, positions are placed in grades on the basis of their

duties, responsibilities, and the qualifications required as evaluated in terms of nine factors common to nonsupervisory positions in General Schedule (GS) occupations.

Factor 1, Knowledge Required by the Position, Level 1-5, 750 points

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts that an employee must understand to do acceptable work (e.g., steps, procedures, practices, rules, policies, theories, principles, and concepts) and the nature and extent of the skills necessary to apply that knowledge.

At Level 1-5, the highest level described in the Standard, incumbents must have knowledge of and skill in applying comprehensive legal regulations, techniques, and procedures that are not readily understood sufficient to:

- perform assistance work requiring extensive searches of records, reference, or historical material and comparisons with complex, voluminous, or broadly written criteria;
- use specialized complicated techniques to complete assignments such as comparing options or identifying conflicts; and
- assist specialists or other legal employees to plan strategy in presenting the Government in its most favorable position by citing State and Federal laws.

This is comparable to the level of knowledge required in the subject position. Incumbents must be able to:

- apply knowledge of fish and wildlife laws, rules, and regulations, including import and export and search and seizure;
- apply knowledge of procedures, regulations, and protocols applicable to investigation support tasks;
- apply knowledge of protocols for computer seizure, collection techniques, and preservation as evidence in investigations;
- skill in onsite crime-scene investigation in order to collect and establish control of evidence;
- analyze and evaluate investigation documentation and evidence and recommend corrections or solutions to issues;
- analyze data to identify trends and to develop and implement quality control and internal control procedures;
- use Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) automated information systems and a variety of internal and external databases for record searches;
- use skill in oral and written communication to make presentations for outreach activities; and
- use skill in assembling and creating visual products, displays or exhibits, both stand-alone and web-based.

The knowledge requirements of this position exceeds Level 1-4 where the information and facts examined are typically straightforward and readily verifiable, need little development, and require limited searches. The knowledge requirements of the position do not meet the criteria for Level 1-6 where incumbents must have practical knowledge of a wide range of technical methods, principles, and practices similar to a narrow area of a *professional* field.

Factor 2, Supervisory Controls, Level 2-3, 275 points

This factor covers the nature and extent of controls exercised by the supervisor over the work performed, the employee's responsibility, and the review of completed work.

At Level 2-3, the highest level described in the Standard, the supervisor makes assignments by outlining or discussing issues and defining objectives, priorities, and deadlines. The employee independently plans the work, resolves problems, follows instructions, and refers controversial issues to the supervisor. Work is reviewed for technical soundness, appropriateness and conformance to requirements. The technical methods and procedures used in completing assignments seldom require detailed review.

This is comparable to the level of supervision exercised over this position. The immediate supervisor or Special Agent leading an investigation outlines objectives. The incumbent performs work independently referring unusual situations to the supervisor or lead Agent. Evidence control work is expected to be technically accurate and is relied upon by investigators to support the prosecution of criminals. Other work is reviewed for accuracy and conformity to policy and requirements. Establishment of process requirements and internal controls are handled with considerable independence.

The incumbent operates more independently than at Level 2-2 where the employee follows instructions that specifically describe how the work is done, and the supervisor reviews work to verify accuracy and conformance to procedures. The level of supervision does not meet the criteria for Level 2-4 where the employee is responsible for planning and carrying out assignments, coordinating the work with others, and interpreting policy on own initiative.

Factor 3, Guidelines, Level 3-3, 275 points

This factor covers the nature of guidelines and the judgment employees need to apply them. At Level 3-3, the highest level described in the Standard, the employee uses guidelines that have gaps in specificity and are not applicable to all work situations. The employee may have to rely on experienced judgment to fill in gaps, identify sources of information, and make working assumptions about what transpired. At this level, the employee uses judgment to reconstruct incomplete files, gather and organize information, and resolve problems referred by others.

This is comparable to the use of guidelines in this position. The laws, regulations, policies and procedures governing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provide general guidance, with particular emphasis on those related to evidence control, computer seizure, evidence documentation, and related administrative processes. The incumbent uses judgment and experience to select and apply the appropriate reference and procedure. Considerable skill is required in applying or adapting existing methods or techniques to a specific investigation. Independent judgment is required to determine to whom case information may be legally released.

The use of guidelines exceeds Level 3-2 where pertinent guidelines are readily available and clearly applicable to most transactions. The use of guidelines does not meet the criteria for Level 3-4 where the employee is typically required to develop new methods, criteria, or propose new policies.

Factor 4, Complexity, Level 4-3, 150 points

This factor covers the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, steps, processes, or methods in the work performed; the difficulty in identifying what needs to be done; and the difficulty and originality involved in performing the work.

At Level 4-3, the highest level described in the Standard, work consists of different and unrelated processes, methods, and sequences of tasks. The employee:

- analyzes facts and identifies issues;
- defines the problems;
- determines courses of action from many alternatives; and
- utilizes automated legal databases and the Internet.

This is comparable to the level of complexity in the subject position. The work involves a variety of law enforcement activities related to evidence control, computer seizure, evidence documentation, and related administrative processes that require the use of different and unrelated procedures and methods. The incumbent is the technical expert regarding computer-related evidence. The incumbent is expected to identify trends and to identify problems and recommend solutions related to evidence-technician work.

The complexity of the position exceeds Level 4-2 where the work consists of related steps and choices are limited. The work does not meet the criteria for Level 4-4 where the work requires making many decisions concerning such things as the planning of the work or refining the methods and techniques to be used.

Factor 5, Scope and Effect, Level 5-3, 150 points

This factor covers the relationships between the nature of work, i.e., the purpose, breadth, and depth of the assignment and the effect of work products or services within and outside the organization. Effect measures such things as whether the work output facilitates the work of others or provides timely services of a personal nature.

At Level 5-3, the highest level described in the Standard, the work involves treating a variety of conventional problems, questions, or situations in conformance with established criteria. The work product may affect the adequacy of field investigations.

This is comparable to the scope and effect of this position. The purpose of the work is to serve as a senior evidence technician involving the most complex and sensitive criminal investigations. The incumbent provides advice and guidance to lower-level technicians and assistants and to investigators regarding evidence collection, preservation, documentation, and control, especially that which is computer-related. The work impacts successful prosecution of cases and the ability of the Service to track, monitor, and evaluate evidence handling.

The scope and effect of this position exceeds Level 5-2 where the work involves specific rules, regulations, or procedures. Work at this level is constrained by well-defined and precise conditions. The work does not meet the criteria for Level 5-4 where the work typically involves such things as establishing criteria, formulating

projects, assessing program effectiveness or investigating or analyzing a variety of unusual problems. At this level, the work product affects a wide range of agency activities or the operation of other agencies.

Factors 6/7, Personal Contacts and Purpose of Contact, Level 6/7-2b, 75 points

These factors include face-to-face and remote dialogue with persons not in the supervisory chain. The levels of these factors consider what is necessary to make the initial contact, the difficulty of communicating with those contacted, the setting in which the contact takes place, and the nature of the discourse.

At Level 6-2, the highest level described in the Standard, contacts are with employees in the same agency and/or members of the general public in a moderately structured setting. This is comparable to the nature of personal contacts in the subject position where contacts are with criminal investigators within FWS and those external members of an investigative team. Contacts also include other staff within FWS, attorneys, State and local officials, and the general public. The work also involves contacts with employees of the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory.

The nature of contacts exceeds Level 6-1 where contacts are generally limited to employees within the immediate organization, office, project, or work unit, and in related support units. The nature of contacts does not meet the criteria for Level 6-3 where typical contacts are with individuals or groups from outside the employing agency in a moderately unstructured situation. Typical of contacts at this level are those with persons in their capacities as attorneys, contractors, or representatives of professional organizations, the news media, or public action groups. Incumbents of this position may have contacts with FWS attorneys, but this is generally in a structured situation.

At Level 7-b, the highest level described in the Standard, the purpose of contacts is to plan, coordinate, or advise on work efforts or to resolve operating problems by influencing or motivating individuals or groups who are working toward mutual goals and who have basically cooperative attitudes. This is comparable to the purpose of contacts in this position where contacts are for the purpose of obtaining and sharing information for investigations, providing compliance information to the public and providing investigation status information to appropriate individuals.

The purpose of contacts exceeds Level 7-a where the purpose is limited to obtaining, clarifying, or giving facts or information. The purpose of contacts does not meet the criteria for Level 7-c where the purpose is to influence, motivate, interrogate, or control persons or groups, the members of which may be fearful, skeptical, uncooperative, or dangerous.

Factor 8, Physical Demands, Level 8-1, 5 points

This factor covers the requirements and physical demands placed on the employee by the work assignment. At Level 8-1, the work is mainly sedentary, but may require periods of walking, standing, bending, or driving an automobile.

This is comparable to the physical demands of this position where investigation support work may require some physical effort such as prolonged standing, bending, stretching, and lifting. The position does not have the physical demands typical of Level 8-2 where the work requires some physical exertion such as walking over rough, uneven, or rocky surfaces; recurring bending, crouching, stooping, stretching, reaching, or similar activities.

Factor 9, Work Environment, Level 9-1 5 points

This factor considers the risks and discomforts in the employee's physical surroundings or the nature of the work assigned and the safety regulations required. At Level 9-1, the work is mainly sedentary, but may require periods of walking, standing, bending, or driving an automobile. This is comparable to the work environment of the subject position where the work is primarily in an office setting. However, some tasks, such as crime scene investigation, obtaining and controlling evidence, may be in outdoor setting including adverse weather conditions and noisy environments.

The work does not meet the criteria for Level 9-2 where the work routinely involves moderate risks or discomforts that require moderate risks or discomforts that require special safety precautions.

Summary:

Factor	Level	Points
1. Knowledge Required by the Position	1-5	750
2. Supervisory Controls	2-3	275
3. Guidelines	3-3	275
4. Complexity	4-3	150
5. Scope and Effect	5-3	150
6/7. Personal Contacts and Purpose of Contacts	6/7-2b	75
8. Physical Demands	8-1	5
9. Work Environment	9-1	5
Total		1685

The total points awarded is 1685. This falls within the range for GS-8 (1605-1850).

Conclusion: The appropriate classification for this position is Evidence Technician, GS-1082-8.

See PD#s: 5000 328 - GS-07
5000 327 - GS-06

Position Designation of National Security and Public Trust Positions

Position Designation Record

Agency Department of the Interior/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Position Title Evidence Technician
Series and Grade/Pay Band 1800J.tb, GS-0802-08
Position Description Number S000323

Duties	Degree of Potential for Compromise or Damage
<i>Other activities demanding a degree of public trust</i>	Moderate impact
Comments:	Provides specialized technical support to criminal investigators, technical expert regarding crime scene evidence collection, evidence documentation and control.

Adjustment for program designation and level of supervision	
<i>Adjustment for Scope of Program and Correlation to Extent of Impact (see definitions)</i>	Multi-agency impact
<i>Adjustment for level of supervision or other controls</i>	Close technical supervision -ability to act independently infrequently

Designation Level	Suitability	
	Investigation Required	Form Required
Tier 2	MBI	SF 85P

Total Points Designation	
<i>Total Initial Position Designation Points from Step 2</i>	10
<i>Adjusted Position Designation Points from Step 3</i>	20

Signature: _____

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